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ABSTRACT

The Model Behavior Shaping Resource Unit (BSRU) project was designed to provide behaviorally oriented intervention techniques to reduce levels of highly inappropriate behaviors in children classified as Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) and Severely and Profoundly Impaired (SPI). By modifying or reducing the frequencies of targeted behaviors to acceptable limits, students would be able to benefit more fully from the educational program, and the degree of disruption to their classes was also expected to be reduced. Both direct services and indirect services, in the form of consultation and training to the special education teachers of children with behavior problems, were offered. Nine children received direct intervention services, while teachers of eleven other children received indirect services in the form of consultation, demonstration, and training. All displayed significant reductions in targeted behavior. Limited training for parents of four children receiving direct services was provided on an individual basis. A summer program involving one hundred teachers was also held. Objectives relating to levels of teachers' mastery of behavior shaping techniques after training and the numbers of parents to receive training were not attained. (Author/AEF)

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MODEL BEHAVIOR SHAPING RESOURCE UNIT EVALUATION REPORT, 1979-1980

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March 1981
Report #8147

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ABSTRACT

The Model Behavior Shaping Resource Unit (BSRU) project was designed to provide behaviorally oriented intervention techniques to reduce the levels of highly inappropriate behaviors in children classified as Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) and Severely and Profoundly Impaired (SPI). By modifying or reducing the frequencies of targeted behaviors to acceptable limits, the students would be able to benefit more fully from the educational program and the degree of disruption to their classes was also expected to be reduced. Both direct services, provided in the old Lankenau School Building, and indirect services, in the form of consultation and training to the special education teachers of children with behavior problems, were offered.

The position of project director was unfilled for approximately five months during this school year, significantly reducing the project's ability to meet its objective. Nine children received direct intervention services, while the teachers of 11 other children received indirect services in the form of consultation, demonstration, and training. Limited training for the parents of four children receiving direct services was provided on an individual basis.

While significant reductions in targeted behaviors were observed for children receiving both direct and indirect services, the objectives relating to levels of teachers' mastery of behavior shaping techniques after training and the numbers of parents to receive training were not attained.

MODEL BEHAVIOR SHAPING RESOURCE UNIT
EVALUATION REPORT, 1979-1980

Project Area:	Behavior Modification for Severely Handicapped Pupils
Activity Manager:	Dr. John Abbott
Project Coordinator:	Mr. John Murphy
Headquarters:	Stevens Administrative Center, 13th & Spring Garden Street
PBRS Code:	25-05-798
Federal Code:	G007804756
Operating Year:	1979-1980 (year two of three year grant)
Funding Source:	EHA Part E of Title VI
Budget:	$156,670
Services Provided:	A model resource room program for shaping behavior of SPI and TMR pupils, and consultative training for teachers on behavior shaping techniques
Number of Staff:	2 teachers, 2 aides
Number of Pupils	9 (directly), 11 (indirectly)
Evaluators:	Victoria Bostic, Alvin Elinow

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Model Behavior Shaping Resource Unit (BSRU) project was designed to provide intervention services to the Severely and Profoundly Impaired (SPI) and the Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) pupils. Specifically, children were chosen to participate if they manifested behavior problems so severe as to interfere with their own learning or the learning of other members of the class.

The intervention program was implemented both directly (by project staff) and indirectly (through training the teacher in the use of behavior shaping techniques). Direct services consisted of intervention by one of the two teachers supplemented by one of the two aides. The goal of the intervention was to reduce the degree to which targeted, inappropriate behaviors were manifested. Pupils were sent to the BSRU site for the duration of the service.

As an indirect service to the children, the teachers of the children were trained in techniques for maintaining the manifestation of unacceptable behaviors at the minimum. Indirect services also were provided through consultation with teachers, physical and occupational therapist, working with the referred

children, teacher training workshops, and individual consultation sessions with parents.

Referrals to date have been accepted only from teachers in the J.E. Hill and Torresdale schools, but will eventually be accepted from all teachers of SPI and TMR pupils. Referrals were prioritized so that the higher priority pupils received the direct intervention, while consultations with teachers of lower priority pupils were established. Priority levels were established based on the severity of the child's problem and the degree of disruption it caused to the student's attainment of IEP goals and disruption of classroom activities.

In addition to the already described project activities specified in the proposal, training and consultation services also were provided to the teacher of SPI pupils who attended the extended school year program. The program ran from July 7, 1980 to August 22, 1980. Eight behavior shaping consultants were hired to serve as consultants to 42 teachers of SPI pupils. Each consultant assisted 5 to 7 teachers in the implementation of behavior shaping techniques, establishing and maintaining behavioral records, general behavior management techniques, and the development of activities to implement I.E.P. specified goals. A total of approximately 200 children received these services. The project director served as coordinator for the eight consultants and provided assistance to them through weekly conferences and on-site visits to the three schools involved. Six weekly, in-service sessions were offered to all teachers and therapists involved in the summer program. Approximately 100 teachers, supervisors and therapists attended these sessions.

PROJECT HISTORY

During the first year of implementation, the project's objectives were only partially realized. This was due to site selection delays, the need to clarify roles, the need to develop policies and procedures, and the need to plan more fully the general program operation.

The project's second year saw improvements in the successful processing and screening of referrals, and the actual delivery of services. Direct services to pupils were provided throughout the year despite the resignation in October 1979 of the project coordinator, who was not replaced until April 1980. Immediately after that appointment, strong efforts were made to provide the indirect services, workshops, and consultations specified in the contract. Additional staffing problems also occurred when the permanent instructional aides were not appointed. Instead, a series of per diem, temporary aides was assigned to assist the project teachers. During the period of time the project had no coordinator, a consultant from Temple University's Woodhaven program helped the teachers plan their intervention strategies for each child. Eleven pupils received indirect services, while nine received direct intervention services during the school year.

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

To assess the knowledge of teachers and aides regarding the use and implementation of behavior shaping techniques, the Woodhaven Center, Level 1 Training Package assessment was administered as a posttest. The number of correct responses was determined and then compared to the 85% level of mastery.

No assessment on onsite teachers' and therapists' techniques in behavior analysis, management, or maintenance was conducted by the project coordinator due to lack of time to observe the teachers and students involved.

Data about parents' responses to training and their perception of the effectiveness of the intervention were gathered through brief telephone interviews.

To determine the degree to which inappropriate behaviors were reduced, teachers' initial records on the pupils were used to determine average initial frequency levels. For pupils still in the BSRU class as of May, 1980, ten executive days of frequency data were gathered by the project coordinator, and the average frequency of inappropriate behavior was determined. No similar data were collected for pupils who returned to their original classes prior to the project coordinator's appointment. Teachers were, however, interviewed briefly for their assessment of the effect of intervention on reducing pupils' inappropriate behaviors.

FINDINGS

The data gathered to evaluate the objectives are presented here. Many modifications and changes in the original evaluation plan had to be made to accommodate the problems that occurred due to the staffing problems that occurred.

Objective 1: Upon completion of the training sessions conducted by the Model BSRU staff, participating TMR and SPI class teachers and aides will demonstrate knowledge of applied behavior analysis to the extent that 85% of them attain mastery scores on the posttest of the Woodhaven Center Level 1 Training Package.

In June, 1980, a one hour in-service training session was conducted by the BSRU project coordinator for nine TMR and SPI teachers and instructional aides. These participants were from the J. E. Hill school, and were interested in being trained because their pupils were receiving direct intervention and would be returning to their classes. Although the Woodhaven Center Level I Training Package was not used during the training, the information presented was consistent with the package, and the posttest was used to assess the participants' mastery of the skills. All three participating teachers correctly answered 16 (85% mastery) of the 18 items, but the six aides' performance ranged from 2 to 12 correct items, representing far less than 85% mastery. This objective was attained by teachers but not by aides.

Objective 2: Upon completion of their training by Model BSRU staff, at least 75% of the classroom teachers and aides at the project site will demonstrate behavior analysis skills as indicated by the project coordinator's review of their documentation of intervention and progress for targeted pupils.

Consultative training (i.e., individual rather than group) was provided to teachers at the J. E. Hill School (the project site) during the school year in the areas of behavior analysis, management, and maintaining the reduced work of targeted behaviors during the school year. Seven teachers, from whose classes the behavior disordered pupils came, and one speech therapist, who served these pupils, received the training.

The project coordinator did not assess the participants' record keeping and intervention skills with the planned pretest because the Woodhaven training method of documentation had not been taught specifically. There is, therefore, no data available as to whether this objective was attained or not.

Objective 3: During the school year, 75% of the parents whose children receive direct BSRU services will attend at least three project parent-training sessions.

Individual consultative training (other than group sessions) were provided to parents during the months of April, May and June after the new project coordinator was hired. Parents of four students participated in the sessions. Other

parents, including surrogate parents, did not respond to announcements for training. This objective was not attained.

Objective 4: At least 75% of the parents who attended three or more BSRU parent-training sessions will implement prescribed behavior shaping strategies with their children at home.

Two of the four parents responded to a telephone survey conducted by the evaluator. They indicated that their child's inappropriate behavior occurred less frequently than it did before they entered BSRU. Both parents also felt they were better able to handle the behavior when displayed. Since no parents attended three or more workshops or consultation sessions, attainment of this objective could not be determined.

Objective 5: For 75% of the behavior-disordered pupils receiving direct intervention services, there will be a significant reduction (at least 50%) in the targeted behavior within three months of the initiation of treatment.

Nine pupils received direct services from September to June; but only six had data sufficient for analysis. Two of the pupils left the school and one pupil came to the project late in the school year.

Of the 13 behaviors targeted for intervention, 11 were reduced by at least 53% with a median of 89%. One behavior was reduced by 43%, and another was not reduced at all. (See Table 1.) All of these six children showed overall reductions in targeted behaviors of more than 50%. This objective was attained.

Table 1

BEHAVIOR SHAPING RESOURCE UNIT
RESULTS OF DIRECT SERVICE INTERVENTION

Child	Inappropriate Behavior(s)	Baseline Frequency	Management Frequency	Percent Reduction For Behavior	Percent Reduction For Child (Median)
1	A. Regurgitation of digested food	100*	32.2*	68%	68%
2	A. Biting self/others	15	1.8	88%	
	B. Clothes tearing	13.5	1.8	98%	
	C. Scratching self/ others	5.1	2.4	53%	53%
	D. Noise making	22	21.7	0%	
	E. Stereotyped acts	13.4	3.4	75%	
3	A. Hands to mouth	78.6	3.2	96%	
	B. Pushing others	16	9.1	43%	89%
	C. Throwing objects	15	1.6	89%	
4	A. Self-stimulation	29	2.3	92%	92%
5	A. Out of seat	30	1.3	95%	94%
	B. Tantrum	13.6	2.2	92%	
6	A. Decrease inappropriate contact	93	2.8	96%	96%

*For this child only, the frequency was recorded as a percentage of time rather than as a frequency count.

Objective 6: For 75% of the behavior-disordered pupils who received direct intervention, the reduction of targeted behaviors will still be evident, or will have been further reduced, three months after return to the classroom.

Weekly observations by the evaluator were not conducted as planned because there were no initial observations conducted when pupils were first returned to their classrooms. There was, therefore, no basis to measure the attainment of this objective.

Objective 7: For 80% of the pupils receiving BSRU services (direct or indirect) teachers and parents will indicate, on a survey conducted in May, that there has been improvement in targeted behaviors.

Seven of nine teachers whose pupils received both direct and indirect services were interviewed by the evaluator. All of these teachers indicated that the behavior problems had improved, and targeted behaviors were decreased as a result of the BSRU intervention. (These interviews were conducted late in the school year and not all teachers could be reached.) This objective was attained.

CONCLUSIONS

The one hour of training late in the school year provided a quick review for three certified teachers sending children to the BSRU, all of whom obtained a mastery score of 85% on the Woodhaven Center, Level 1, Training Package. The review was, however, insufficient for the six aides whose scores on the posttest were less than the targeted level of mastery.

Training was offered to the J. E. Hill teachers and a speech therapist, but no formal assessment was made of their skills in applying behavior analysis, management, and maintenance techniques.

Parent training was offered by the project coordinator, but only four pupils' parents attended. The late starting date for the training, rather than having training correspond in time to the child's placement in BSRU, may have influenced the low response.

Only two of the four parents could be contacted, even though there were repeated efforts to do so. The two that did respond were very positive about the change in their children's behavior and their ability to manage the behavior.

The direct intervention strategies had a very high success rate in reducing the manifestation of inappropriate behaviors. For the most part, the behaviors were brought under control, although not entirely eliminated.

It was clear that teachers and parents were pleased with the intervention of BSRU. Whether inappropriate behaviors might have been further reduced or eliminated had parent and teacher training occurred simultaneously with direct intervention is not clear. During the third year a full implementation is expected. It should then be possible to make more definite statements regarding program impact.